

# **Creating a Strategic Plan- Meeting #1 for the Bethlehem Township School District**

## **Mission Statement**

**Our students will acquire the skills and knowledge to enable them to become independent, respectful, responsible citizens who strive for excellence and embrace learning as fundamental to successfully adapt to our ever-changing global community**

## **Session 1**

### **What are the Strengths, Achievements and Challenges of the Bethlehem School District?**

On March 21, 2023, Bethlehem Township School District administrators, Board of Education members, staff, parents, and community members, twenty-six (26 ) in all, came together to initiate strategic planning. The first evening focused on the strengths and challenges of the Bethlehem Township School District. The meeting began with a welcome and introduction by Board President, Mr. Kyle Harris. Mr. Edward Abato, Superintendent, presented the current “State of the Schools” report. Facilitator Gwen Thornton, from New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), was introduced and provided an introduction to the strategic planning process.

We reviewed the consensus process utilized in strategic planning. The topic for the evening focused on identifying district strengths and challenges. Participants gathered in randomly assigned groups, four groups in total, and engaged in brainstorming the districts strengths and challenges. After group discussion, each group identified their consensus points, “Top 10” strengths and challenges, and presented those to the full group of meeting participants.

The information that follows is a summary of the work of the small groups. As discussed with the meeting participants, all consensus points are recorded and posted on the district website to share the group work during the course of the strategic planning process.

## Group Consensus: Strengths, Achievements & Challenges

### Green Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Small, close community	Less clubs, etc. than larger schools
Students look out for each other (small class sizes)	Engaging entire community (seniors, etc.)
Community support, CPTA, parents, etc.	Technology
Students are well prepared for North	Music, arts
Teachers	Stem
Administration	Buildings (including future use)
Board cohesion	Social adaptability
Curriculum Director	Language programs
	Using data to drive instruction
	We don't know what we don't know

### Red Dot Team:

Strengths	Challenges
Community Engagement	Curriculum needs to be revised G/T, MTSS
Community Pride	Outdated buildings
Teaching and Support Staff	Foreign Language Program
Family Feel	Lack of SEL-> need more of it
Clear School-Home Communications	Lack of STEAM
New energetic Administrative Team	Technology
Kind Students	Consistent leadership
Peer leadership i.e., Book buddies, peer leaders in middle school	Follow through with goals/objectives, i.e., 2018-2023 great ideas... never happened
Program availability	Staff shortage (applicant pool is low)
Resiliency	Funding
	Bring parents back into schools to better engage; reinstitute school celebrations and honor society

**Bethlehem School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes**

**Blue Dot Team:**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Teachers	Finance-deceased state aid
Community/Events	Spanish/World Language
Small school/Community	Curriculum
Clubs	2 Buildings
YMCA	Facilities -aging
Athletics	Enrollment
	Stem
	Grants

**Black Dot Team: :**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Dedicated staff	Technology- keyboarding/typing; comfort
Small class sizes, small district	Extra-curriculars for all grades
FOSS hands on science program	Supporting students who learn differently; 504/IEP; Teacher training
Extra-curricular activities	Facilities- classroom basic comforts i.e. A.C, screens, security
Flexibility of staff i.e. return to school	K-3 reading/phonics program
PE/Health programs-snow PE	SS Curriculum/critical thinking skills
	Parent engagement
	Community support-financials
	Diversity in curriculum; celebrate diversity

## ***Bethlehem School District Strategic Planning Meeting #1 Outcomes***

Following each group reporting out on their consensus points, the large group agreed there were many **common themes**:

Small close-knit community and small district/class sizes

Dedicated teachers and support staff

New energetic administrative staff

Engaged and active PTA and parents

Need for curriculum revision

Aging facilities

Finances-decreases in state aid

Technology

World Language program

Expansion of extra-curricular program

STEM/STEAM

**The second strategic planning session is scheduled for:**

**Thursday, April 19, 2023, at 6:30 pm,**

Meetings are scheduled for 1.5 hours. Meetings start and end promptly.

During the April 19th meeting we will create a shared vision together for the future of the – Bethlehem Township School District . . . we will talk about our aspirations and expectations for our students and school district.

Please join us. Bring a friend! Everyone is welcome! We look forward to seeing you!

**Please RSVP by signing up online.**

<https://www.smores.com/wb6aj>